(d) by when this modernization work would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (d) No, Sir. However, World Bank assisted State Health System Projects, pertaining to strengthening and upgradation of secondary health care systems in the states have been approved and completed in Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka and Punjab. Such projects in Orissa, Maharastra, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu are under implementation.

Gastric Cancer due to Nitrate

3951. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that over 25 crore people in the country face the risk of contracting gastric cancer and damage in their central nervous and cardio vascular system due to dangerously high levels of nitrate in ground water; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) As per the WHO Guidelines of Drinking Water Quality, (3rd Edn., Vol. 1, Chapter 12, 2004), the weight of evidence is strongly against there being an association between nitrite and nitrate exposures in humans and the risk of cancer. A conclusive evidenced is yet to be established as regards the relationship between nitrite/nitrate and neurological manifestations. There is slight protective effects of these ions on the cardiovascular systems.

Falling Sex Ratio

3952. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact in their 7th Conference, the All India Democratic Women's Association has expressed concern over the falling sex ratio in the country;

(b) if so, whether the deficit of women in the pupulation is now 36 million in the country;